



The President's Daily Brief

10 November 1973

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Egyptian forces shot down an Israeli plane yesterday, but on the Syrian front cease-fire violations were minor. Cairo and Tel Aviv continue to withhold final acceptance of the US-backed cease-fire plan. (Page 1)

The EC Nine believe the pro-Arab tenor of the EC declaration will facilitate procurement of Arab oil and permit unpublicized distribution to the Dutch. Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, has told Rome that Italy is impeding the Arab oil embargo against the US by fueling Sixth Fleet vessels. (Page 3)

The departure of Ieng Sary--the Khmer Communists' "special envoy" in Peking--for Cambodia presumably is related to Sihanouk's announcement yesterday that all portfolios of his "government" would be transferred to cadre within Cambodia. (Page 5)

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The French plan their initial deployment of the Pluton tactical nuclear missile system next spring. (Page 6)

Notes on USSR-China and Uganda appear on Page 7.

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ARAB STATES - ISRAEL

Cairo claims its surface-to-air missiles brought down two Israeli aircraft yesterday and that two pilots were captured, but Tel Aviv has admitted the loss of only one plane. Israel continues to fly numerous reconnaissance missions on both fronts, justifying the activity by its determination not to be taken by surprise should the fighting resume. On the Syrian front there were minor cease-fire violations with desultory firing lasting about three hours.

Both Tel Aviv and Cairo continue to withhold final acceptance of the US-backed cease-fire plan. After a lengthy session last night, the Israeli cabinet announced that Tel Aviv maintains its "positive position in principle" in favor of signing. The cabinet will continue its deliberations this morning, however, and has called for additional consultations with the US.

Israel perceives three sticking points:

--the agreement provides no assurances that Cairo will lift its naval blockade of Bab al-Mandab;

--it calls for immediate discussions on a return to battlelines of October 22 that Tel Aviv claims cannot be fixed; and

--it impairs Israel's ability to monitor the flow of supplies along the Cairo-Suez road that are going to Egypt's encircled Third Army.

The agreement is further criticized for failing to clarify the status of Israeli POWs held by Syria.

Egypt seems to have adopted a wait-and-see attitude while unofficially maintaining its insistence on an Israeli return to the October 22 lines and obscuring the status of the Bab al-Mandab blockade.

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Cairo's authoritative Middle East News Agency, after initially broadcasting a seriously distorted version of the cease-fire agreement, announced its provisions accurately late last night.



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By early this morning, the Soviet press had not yet carried reports that Israel and Egypt were close to signing a peace agreement. TASS charged last night that Tel Aviv is continuing to sabotage UN resolutions requiring the withdrawal of Israeli troops to the cease-fire lines of October 22.

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EC - ARAB STATES

The EC member governments generally believe that the pro-Arab tenor of the EC declaration will facilitate procurement of Arab oil and permit unpublicized distribution to the Dutch.

West German officials confirm that the Nine reached an understanding at their meeting of November 6 to take care of Dutch oil requirements. This understanding is clearly both temporary and fragile as well as dependent on continuing events in the Middle East. The idea would be to handle the problem, as necessary, "under the table."

The Kuwait Minister for Oil, who reiterated on November 6 that no Arab oil would be shipped to the Netherlands, indirectly warned other EC members against helping the Dutch. He pointed out that overall supplies would be limited and implied that the Arabs would react harshly toward those who publicly defied the embargo. He said, however, that he doubted the Arabs would investigate undercover shipments.

The Saudis, meanwhile, have told Rome that Italy is impeding the Arab oil embargo against the United States by fueling Sixth Fleet vessels. Rome interprets the Saudi demarche as a threat that Italy is in danger of being added to the Arab oil embargo list. While the Sixth Fleet has in fact been fueled at sea since the Middle East war began, the Saudis could focus on refueling after the fleet returns to port. This could raise the issue of a possible Arab embargo on fuel for NATO forces. Fuel for the Sixth Fleet is provided essentially under NATO agreements and in one case actually comes from NATO stocks.

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PAKISTAN - NORTH KOREA - ARAB STATES

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CAMBODIA

Ieng Sary, the Khmer Communists' "special envoy" in Peking, who has kept close tabs on Sihanouk for the Communists for the past two years, is returning to Cambodia via Hanoi. Neither Sihanouk nor his "prime minister," Penn Nouth, attended Sary's farewell banquet in Peking on November 8--another clear sign of the tension between Sihanouk and the Khmer Communists.

Sary's departure undoubtedly is related to Sihanouk's announcement yesterday that all of the portfolios of his "government" will be transferred to cadre within Cambodia. Sihanouk also indicated that his in-country "defense minister," Khieu Samphan, will serve as "acting prime minister" until Penn Nouth returns to Cambodia. Sihanouk said that all that will remain of his "government" in Peking will be a small mission--presumably headed by himself--to receive foreign diplomats.

Sihanouk first floated the idea of moving his "government" to Cambodia last month, stating that it would help remove the exile stigma from his Peking-based operation. At the time, the Prince indicated that the initiative had come from him rather than from the Khmer Communists, and that it had been accompanied by his offer to step aside in favor of a Khmer Communist leader. Under the new arrangement, however, Sihanouk is to remain as "chief of state." Whether this means that the Prince has gained ground with the Khmer Communists on the negotiations question is still uncertain.

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FRANCE

The French plan their initial deployment of the Pluton tactical nuclear missile system next spring. According to press reports, an artillery regiment of the Eighth Mechanized Division headquarters at Compiègne will be the first French unit to be equipped with the missile. This regiment now has the US-built Honest John tactical nuclear weapon system.

The Pluton is designed to provide nuclear fire support at the corps and division level. The missile 25X1

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NOTES

USSR-China: The Peking border talks have entered their fifth year, but the chief Soviet negotiator, Deputy Foreign Minister Ilichev, has been back in Moscow since mid-July.

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The Soviets may eventually name a new delegation chief of lower rank.

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Uganda: In an angry reaction to the announcement that the US Embassy in Kampala will close, President Amin accused the approximately 200 Americans still in Uganda of being spies and saboteurs and said "the sooner they leave the country, the better." Amin issued lists of remaining Americans to the military and requested security officials to watch them closely. While Amin's statement suggests he will not cause trouble for any Americans who want to leave, undisciplined Ugandan Army troops could take some actions against them.

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